

Become an employer of choice
Take age out of recruitment decisions





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Foreword



Belinda Pyke, Director of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission

“Older workers across Europe are all too often excluded from the jobs market when they still have much to offer. Certain groups such as older women or older people from ethnic minorities can be particularly vulnerable as they face multiple forms of discrimination.

The European Union has put in place legislation to remove age discrimination in employment. This is a vital step, but it will not change attitudes and stereotypes overnight.

The EU’s ‘active ageing’ strategy aims to encourage older workers to stay longer on the labour market. The employment rate for older workers has risen in the last few years, reversing a long-standing

trend. This is good news, but there is still a long way to go. Given the challenges of demographic change, employers need to step up their efforts to attract and keep older workers in employment.

Discrimination against older workers and job seekers is bad for business, bad for individuals, and bad for Europe’s economy. Many employers are shutting the door to an important source of talent and diversity. We all have a role to play in highlighting the benefits of a mixed age, diverse workforce.”

Why we need to change recruitment strategies?



Despite mantras like “successful aging”, “positive aging”, “aging well”, “the turbo pensioners”, the aging of society has not significantly changed our perceptions of older workers. It seems the paradigm from the generation of 1968 “*Don’t trust anyone aged over 30*” is still persisting:

- The **ideal worker** is seen as being an **early 30s male**.
- In consequence, older job seekers face considerable difficulties in getting a job and **only 41% of older workers** in the European Union are **employed**.
- Mature employees are often the **first** to be made **redundant** and the **last** to be **hired**.

In a time of shrinking labour market, of a new generation of employees in short supply, an increase in the number of older workers, the success of your organisation depends more than ever on having a right mixture of younger and older workers, with the right skills and abilities. This means adopting age-positive recruitment and retention policies. We need to move away from thinking that focuses solely on those in their 30s.

But we know this can be challenging, since the recruitment strategies must reach out to an age span of 50 years or more. You will need to attract job-seekers with differing values and perceptions about work, family life and work-life balance.

Whether you are ...

...an **employer**, a **trade unionist** or an **equal opportunities officer**, with this brochure we aim:

- **to promote** an awareness that the time has come for re-orientation in HRM policies
- **to highlight** the advantages of an age-balanced workforce
- **to encourage** to rethink the current recruitment policies.

We are all affected by the implications of a greying workforce, its impact on economic growth and productivity and the ageist attitudes towards older people. For this reason, politicians,

industry, professional associations and unions alike must face the challenge of the demographic shift.

Thus, the **mature@eu consortium** is proud of having involved social partners, companies, universities and NGOs all with a deep and wide understanding of recruitment issues in an ageing society.

Together we have provided one of the most comprehensive reviews of age diversity recruitment.



Do you consider mature applicants when it comes to new hires?

Many managers view younger candidates as more energetic, flexible and willing to be trained. And many organisations have a culture where the younger workers are the yardstick. In such an environment, mature age job seekers are at the mercy of a 'discrimination cycle' which extends from recruitment to retrenchment. The cycle begins with a perception of limited capacity to benefit from retraining which leads to exclusion from training. This leads to the impression that older workers have out-dated skills and experience.

As a result older workers are more likely to be targeted when downsizing decisions are made. Viewed another way, the cycle represents a self-fulfilling prophecy about the productive capacity of older workers.

Real age, however, has little to do with the calendar and a lot with the fact that:

- Everyone **ages** at a **different time** in his or her life, and in a **different way**.
- Everyone experiences an **individual ageing process** with the increase and decrease of certain functions.
- **Everyone is faced with the task of adapting** learning skills, of adjusting behaviour and of developing new perspectives during his or her personal ageing process.

It can be taken as a rule: the decisive factors for a person's individual ageing process are to be found in his or her specific life and job history.





Anne-Sophie Parent, Director of AGE - the European Older People's Platform

"Why facilitating the employment of older workers needs to be a key priority at European level.

With the rapid ageing of the European population and increased life expectancies, extending working lives has become a key priority at EU level. However, certain barriers prevent the full participation of older people in the labour market. Existing approaches to the employment of older workers in the EU will have to change.

While adequate legislation against age discrimination in employment is indispensable, it is not enough in itself, and more

action is needed from employers and governments to deliver results. Active labour market policies targeting the specific age group of older workers are necessary to ensure a change of culture and approach.

These could take the form of adapting working conditions to the needs of older workers, the creation of incentives encouraging older workers to remain longer in employment, the promotion of flexible work and incremental or part-time retirement, and the provision of an inclusive, attractive, safe and adaptable work environment which takes on board the needs and expectations of older workers."

Did you know that age discrimination in employment practices is unlawful?

Direct age discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their age. For example, direct discrimination is when in a job advert states “applicants should be 25-35 years of age.”

46% of Europeans think that discrimination on the basis of age is widespread.

57% EU citizens feel that in their country people aged over 50 are considered no longer capable of working efficiently.

49% believe that a candidate's age can be disadvantage when seeking employment.

8 out of 10 EU citizens consider that, given equivalent qualifications, people aged 50+ have less chance of obtaining a job, being accepted for training or being promoted.

Source:
Special Eurobarometer 263, 2007



Stanimira Taneva - New Bulgarian University, Career Development Centre, **BULGARIA**:
“The ‘Special Eurobarometer Wave’ indicates that 8 out of 10 Bulgarian citizens feel that in our country people aged over 50 are considered no longer capable of working efficiently. Age management is starting to get more attention, but not yet much as a distinctive topic. There is therefore a clear need to mainstream this issue.”



Rachel Kryz, Director of EFA - Employers Forum on Age

“There also needs to be a fundamental shift in everyone’s perception of age and where the boundaries of acceptable behaviour are.

In our view this is where the real challenge lies; affecting culture change. If people don’t understand what age discrimination is and isn’t, it will be impossible for them to recognise when they are being ageist or when they are a victims of ageism.

This presents significant difficulties for employers charged with training employees and managers in avoiding discriminatory behaviour. But with a commitment from managers to age diversity together with proper policies and effective procedures, these problems can be overcome and organisations can enjoy the benefits of an age diverse workforce.”



Did you know that continuing with age discrimination ...



Source:
O'Connell 2005

...could result in your organisation facing a law suit?

Since the adoption of the **Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC** by the European Council, employers are required to protect employees, applicants and others against discrimination, harassment and victimisation, either on the basis of their actual age or the age they appear to be.

Signals that age discrimination is present include:

- a marked **statistical difference** in success rates for different age groups in apparently similar circumstances;
- a **lack of rationale for decisions** that appear to disregard relevant considerations, where the claimant is older and better qualified;
- **comments** that indicate an intention to **discriminate**;
- a pattern of **significant inconsistency** with older candidates' previous assessments;
- **language in advertisements** that, given their natural and normal meaning, indicate an intention to rely upon age as a material factor;
- **discriminatory questions** asked or age-discriminatory statements at interview;
- a **lack of transparency**, or unexplained procedural unfairness, may create an inference of discrimination;
- a **mismatch** between formal selection criteria and those apparently applied in practice may also create an inference of discrimination.



Liz Mestheneos, Founder member of 50+Hellas

“Unemployment and social exclusion have negative consequences for an individual’s income, health and well being at all ages.

The EC and its social partners have moved slowly to policies that remove barriers to older workers employment with some positive results (EC Employment 2007).

Further policies and practices must show genuine value and invest in older workers by investing in their careers, education and training. They should also result in better and healthier working environments and conditions; and increased

employment flexibility.

Older workers need carrots not sticks to encourage their labour market participation. NGOs seek to promote the voice of older workers at EU and national levels. We stress the benefit of choice and flexibility, recognising the very different work, education, biographies and careers experienced by older workers.

We want to promote genuinely age neutral employment policies and to increase participation rates amongst mature people while valuing them as people who can contribute to a competitive but social Europe designed for people of all ages.”



Did you know that demographic changes will soon result in shrinking labour supply?

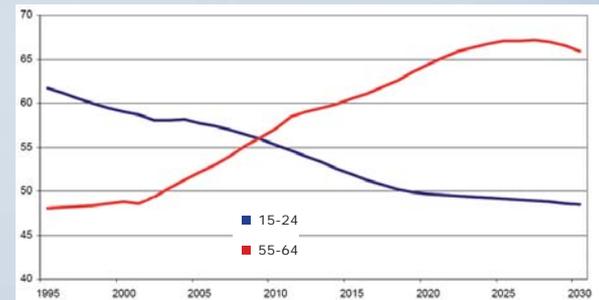
From 2010 onwards the number of young people entering the labour market is going to be smaller than the number of those who will retire. In 2050 there are expected to be 66 million persons of 55-64 and only 48 million of 15-24. The labour market is changing:

- The supply of **young**, skilled workers will **dwindle**
- The group of **middle-aged** workers will **decline**
- The core staff will shift to those age 50+
- The number of **60+** will **increase**.

As a result, overall labour force numbers will be strongly influenced by the activity patterns of the older workers. Is your organisation ready for these changes?

Initial estimates show that even a 10% take-up rate of 55-64 year olds would increase employment by 3.5 million people in the EU.

The demographic projections are clear:
Absolute size in millions of young and old aged groups for EU25, 1995-2030



Sources:
Eurostat 2004,
Demographic Projections
(Baseline scenario)

MS Consulting
& Research Ltd, 2007



Maria Schwarz-Woelzl - Centre for Social Innovation, **AUSTRIA**:

“Austria has one of the European Union’s lowest employment rates of people aged 55+. Especially older women bear a high risk of exclusion from the labour market. It is necessary to reduce prejudice against older workers and to promote a change of mentality throughout society.”



Eleonora Hostasch, Chair of the European Commission's Expert Group on Demographic Issues

"Mobilising the full potential of older people is a key response to demographic change.

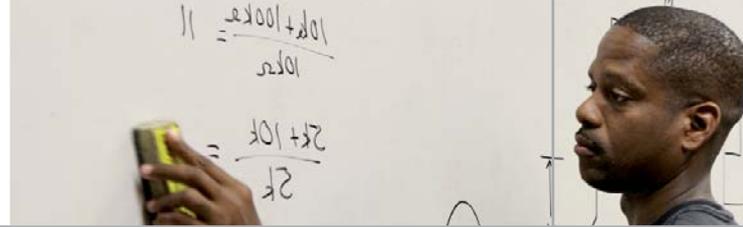
Older people, who should be seen as active participants in society, have the resources and potential to benefit society as a whole. We need their knowledge, know-how and their contribution.

The continued participation of older workers in working life can make a valuable contribution to improving the performance and productivity of the economy which is in turn of benefit to all parts of society.

This requires active age management and workplace development, improving

well-being at work, maintaining workers' health and working ability and updating the skills of ageing personnel by encouraging lifelong learning.

Governments alone cannot take forward employment policies for older people; to do so they must co-operate with social partners and have the support of the business community to promote the employment of older people. Let us see the increased ageing of the population not only as a challenge but also as an opportunity to improve the competitiveness and innovative abilities of the European economy and to promote growth and employment."



Why the ICT sector needs to move away ...

...from its obsession with younger employees.

Employment within the ICT sector is heavily skewed towards the **25 to 44 age groups**. The average age of ICT workers in the European Union is 39. For example: In UK the average age is 39 years and in Germany the vast majority of IT workers are under 44.

The ICT sector often seeks to present itself as being at the very edge of innovation, new ideas and innovative behaviour. Yet the evidence indicates that this sector's recruitment policies are rooted in very traditional forms of

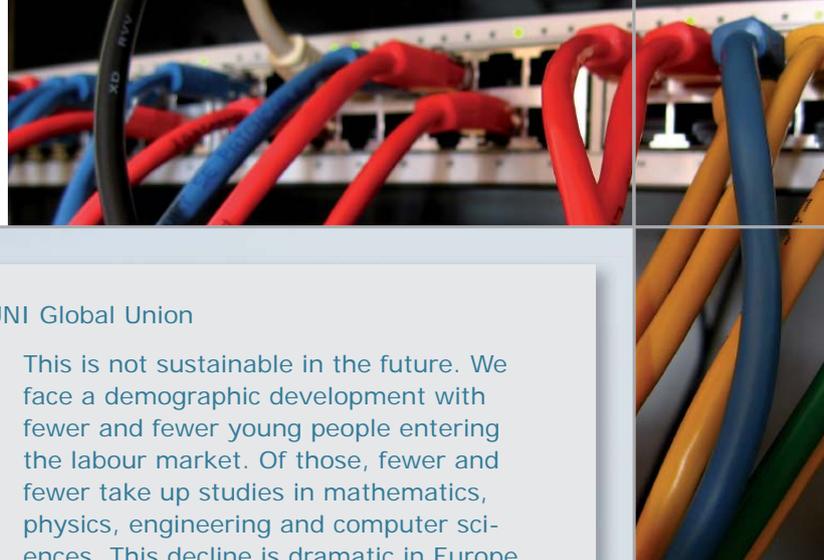
discrimination directed at women and older workers. In fact, a significant valuable resource is likely to be ignored at a time of increasing skills shortages in the sector.

Thus, your organisation does not prove how innovative it is by solving the "problem" of mature workers by dismissal or early retirement – innovation means successfully integrating workers of all ages into the organisational framework of your enterprise.



Katerina Papakonstantinou - Greek Research & Technology Network, **GREECE**:

"Surveys indicate that mature-aged people that have received on-the-job-training remain loyal to their company. By comparison younger employees, tend to look for another position after two to three years in the same company. Life Long Learning and Training are the key words, especially in the ICT sector."



Gerhard Rohde, Head of Department at UNI Global Union

“Today the percentage of IT professionals working in the industry at the age between 50 and 65 is little more than 6% of the entire IT workforce.

There is evidence that recruitment in the industry is discriminatory in a sense that recruitment procedures are heavily biased towards young males with no family responsibilities, who are mobile and prepared to work long hours without overtime compensation. Rejuvenation seems to be a mantra in the industry and often-generous packages are offered to mid-aged professionals to entice early retirement. Ageism is a problem for IT professionals.

This is not sustainable in the future. We face a demographic development with fewer and fewer young people entering the labour market. Of those, fewer and fewer take up studies in mathematics, physics, engineering and computer sciences. This decline is dramatic in Europe but also in Australia and the US. If IT companies want to avoid a skills shortage they have to come up with innovative HR policies to hire and retain mature professionals.

Doing nothing against this development will lead to a “war for talents”, which nobody can win.”

Did you know it is a myth that an employee's abilities decline with age?

It is often said that older workers are less able to learn, are more cranky and rigid, are less healthy and powerful. Contrary to these common misconceptions, the most authoritative studies of age and performance show that no age-related downward trend in work ability or performance is observable:

Mature workers:

- **use experience** to offset any decline in cognitive ability
- are **quite capable of learning** new skills and adapt well to new technology

- are **interested in career** and self development
- are often **more flexible** than younger workers
- contribute to a **diversified workplace** culture
- do not necessarily want to retire
- have a **lower sickness** incidence rate
- are overall **more satisfied** with their job compared to younger colleagues

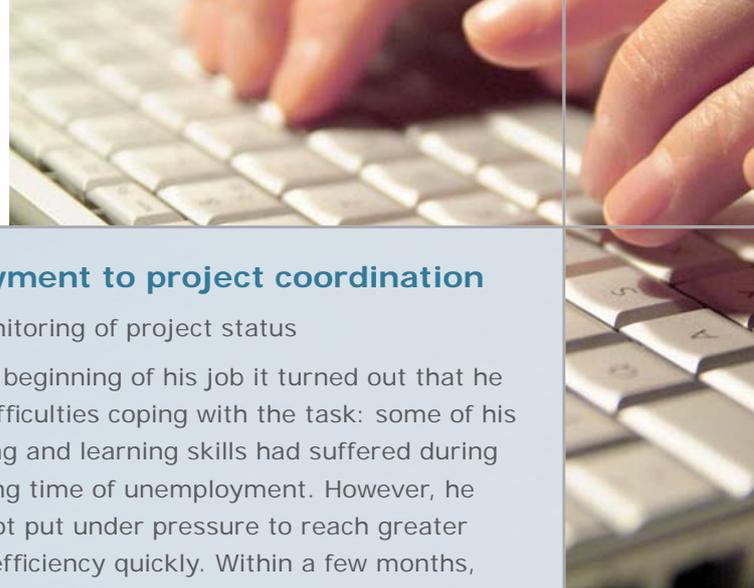
However, age-based stereotypes about capabilities of mature workers are damaging to both workers and employers and should therefore be scrapped.



Line Pillet - Swiss Occidental Leonardo, **SWITZERLAND**:

"From my experience, there are many benefits from hiring older workers such as: dedication to work, punctuality, efficiency and confidence, maturity, political sense and diplomacy, and especially a well established network of contacts. The unique skills and values of older workers can really make a difference and have a positive impact on your management for years to come."

Success story



Mature IT expert from permanent unemployment to project coordination

A small, 10-year-old software company has very little experience with mature software developers. Because deadlines were often missed and quality was a problem, management decided to hire a project manager. They decided in favour of a 51-year-old, unemployed software developer.

The following duties were part of his job activities:

- Assuming the scope statement from project managers and dividing work into packages
- Distributing the work packages among software developers and assigning time allotments
- Standardisation and control of work packages

■ Monitoring of project status

At the beginning of his job it turned out that he had difficulties coping with the task: some of his working and learning skills had suffered during the long time of unemployment. However, he was not put under pressure to reach greater work efficiency quickly. Within a few months, he successfully distributed the work packages among software engineers and increased the transparency of their deadlines – without having former knowledge of the product or having written a single line of code himself.

According to the company's management, this kind of job seems to be particularly suitable for mature workers.

Source:
Lünstroth 2001:51f

Did you know that hiring older workers can bring positive economic benefits?

The cost argument against older workers is short-sighted when you consider the assets of experience and social skills. On the contrary, overcoming age barriers offers economic advantages. Research suggests age-friendly employment practices can add up to 20% to a firm's competitiveness, innovation and productivity (Adecco Institute 2006).

Recruitment benefits of an older worker, calculation example:

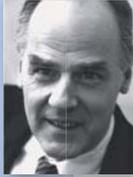
- A worker aged 45 and over is 2.4 times more likely to **remain** in his/her current employment than the rest of the workforce.



Mike Healy - University of Westminster, **UNITED KINGDOM:**

"Recent research from the EFA (UK) shows that 20% job applicants say that age has stood in the way of them getting a job. Over a third of people aged 50-69 believe they were forced into retirement. Yet the evidence shows that there is no justifiable reason why mature job seekers should be treated differently than their younger counterparts. We have to assert that any form of discrimination, including that based on age, undermines our basic human rights."

- The **median recruitment cost factor** affected by factors such as type of recruitment, external recruitment rate, organisational initiated turnover, expense factor, days to fill and days to start is **\$1017**
- The cost of recruitment multiplied by the ratio of employment duration for workers aged 45 and over and the rest of the workforce:
 $\$1017 \times 2.4 = \2441
- Recruitment benefits estimates are: \$2441 (for the rest of the workforce) – \$1017 (for workers aged 45 and over) = \$1424
- **Estimated net recruitment benefits of a worker aged 45 or over = \$1424**



Chris Ball, Chief Executive of TAEN - The Age and Employment Network (UK)

“Effective age management policies need to be adopted at all levels - in employing organisations, by individuals and across the labour market. In the context of our rapidly ageing societies, it is important to remove age barriers to employment. People of all ages have experience, skills and qualities which the European labour market must use to their advantage.

Tapping into a wider pool of talent, experience and skills can help increase productivity, maintain a competitive advantage and improve the bottom line. But to do so, the appropriate retention and recruitment policies must be in place

to create a workforce that reflects better today's working age population. This means removing artificial age barriers and dispelling stereotypes about learning and personal development.

Adopting age neutral recruitment and career development procedures is essential. Employers should ensure that their human resources managers do not have age-related prejudices. An action plan is useful for backing up such an equal opportunities policy. Positive action may need to be taken to tackle any age imbalance.”



Did you know that ignoring the demographic challenge...

...is a risky strategy?

Age homogeneity within organisations will be seen as increasingly risky as age gaps begin to have an impact.

Examples of demographic traps:

- **Companies with mostly middle-aged or old employees:** Principles of seniority permeate all areas of personnel policy and prevent younger people from being recruited or retained for longer periods. In the long term due to early retirement, the company also slowly loses many essential staff because the staff level gradually diminishes and cannot be replaced.
- **Companies with mostly middle-aged employees:** A rejuvenation strategy (exchange old for young) is pursued through a continuous

early retirement process. Due to the intense “war of talents” (cut-throat competition in the personnel recruitment market), there is a high turnover rate among young specialised staff who only stay for an average of two to four years. As a result of the unstable staffing levels in certain areas, the continuity of the value creation process is impaired.

- **Companies with mostly young employees:** Due to the fierce “war of talents” and the high degree of willingness among young employees to change jobs, the entire workforce is subject to continual fluctuation.

Thus, the most rational and constructive approach is to adopt an active mixed-age workforce management.

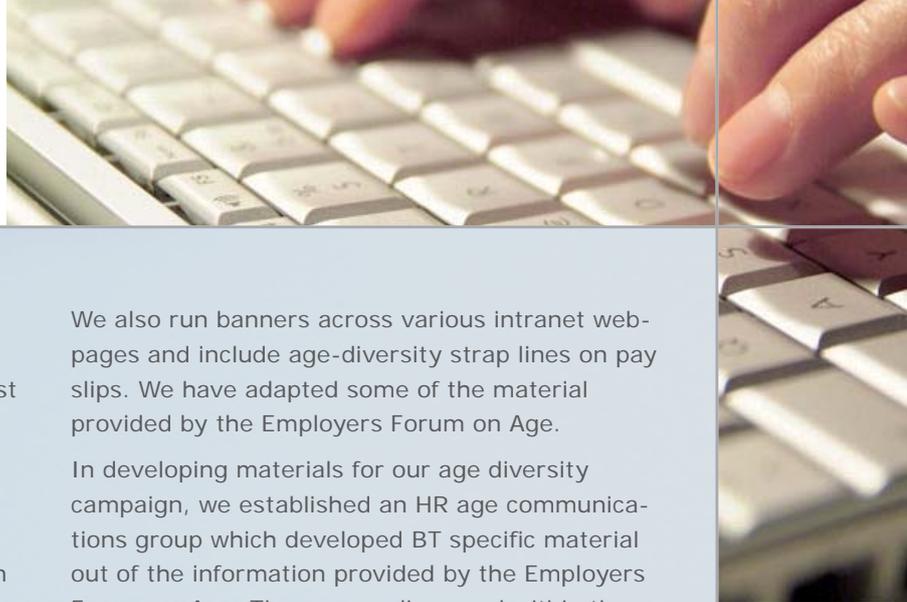
Source: Köchling 2003,
In: Buck and Dworschak,
2003:101f



Istvan Bessenyei - Information Society Research and Teaching Group, **HUNGARY:**

“In 2004, 39% of Hungarian enterprises have hired 15-29-year old employees, while only 16% hired 45+. In respect to layoffs, the 45+ was in the worst situation. Mature employees have neither any formal social protection nor any opportunities for re-entering into the labour market.”

Good Practice



British Telecom

As a business we believe fundamentally in the merits of diversity and the business benefits that diversity can bring. BT is always looking to be best in class or ahead of the game in these areas. So having made sure we are compliant with current diversity legislation, we are now looking at what steps we can take to move beyond compliance.

We have run an internal age-awareness campaign which makes use of a range of materials such as posters. This campaign has been designed to make BT people aware of their obligations under age-neutral regulations. We do not have an age-diversity house style and all our posters tend to take an individual approach within our overarching corporate branding. We make use of our intranet to provide on-line training.

We also run banners across various intranet web-pages and include age-diversity strap lines on pay slips. We have adapted some of the material provided by the Employers Forum on Age.

In developing materials for our age diversity campaign, we established an HR age communications group which developed BT specific material out of the information provided by the Employers Forum on Age. These were discussed within the communications group with our diversity reps, which are in each line of business, and we came up with the slogan "Age of Change". Our diversity reps, who are all HR people and who have extensive HR training, meet regularly together to discuss diversity issues."

Source:
Interview with Becky Mason,
BT People Networks

Did you know there are many businesses which benefit...

...from recruiting older applicants?

Research indicated that employers prize the positive attitudes that older workers display in the following areas:

- **High retention rates:** Employers reported that older workers are associated with high retention rates, which helps to reduce recruitment costs and can lead to better knowledge management.
- **Lower absenteeism:** Older workers are likely to have few periods of short-term absence. This means cost savings and work schedules with a high degree of confidence.

■ **Reliability, commitment and dedication:**

Older workers could be relied upon to:

- exhibit good timekeeping;
- work consistently throughout the day or shift;
- consider the needs of the team they work with; and
- give “over and above” the basic requirement of the job because they take pride in their work and wish to deliver a good quality service.



Mirjana Oblak - Security Technology Competence Centre, **SLOVENIA:**

“Compared with other European countries, Slovenia is a country with a very high percentage of older persons, and a rapidly ageing population. By 2050, the percentage of people over 65 will have increased from 15% to 30%. A change of the employment paradigm is inevitable if we want to improve or even only maintain the existing quality of life.”

- **Flexibility and innovation:** The employers interviewed often found that solutions identified by older workers are generally 'workable' as they are often drawn from their wider 'life experiences'.
- **People-orientated skills:** They often show a degree of calm authority when difficult circumstances arise.
- **People development skills:** Through sharing knowledge and experience; by bringing a sense of 'balance' to teams; or by creating a 'virtuous circle' whereby all staff are encouraged to display the same level of commitment and dedication as older workers, they can make a positive contribution to the development of younger members of staff.
- **Ability to deal with change:** Frequently older workers will have experienced periods

of change in the past, which enables older workers to deal with change in the workplace with equanimity.

- **Leadership:** The combination of their knowledge, experience, work ethic and life-skills can be inspirational to others and offer leadership in the workplace.
- **Generic knowledge of other industries:** Older workers are likely to have worked for other employers and/or in other sectors of industry – this generic knowledge can be drawn on to the benefit of their own business. They work efficiently, contribute to the overall effectiveness of the organisation, and relate well to colleagues and customers. All of this has a substantial and positive effect on business profitability.

Source:
Age Positive, 2001



Did you know that age bias can appear in all stages...



...of the recruitment process?

Age bias starts with a company's public image, job advertisements, and continues with recruitment and selection practices and treatment of job applicants.

The starting point of any age-related change should be based on a sound job analysis. In checking the tasks and knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform a job, you may discover mature workers would be suitable for the post. Further, you may discover that only minor job restructuring could provide a fresh new source of applicants to the recruitment pool, as well as avoid what might be a costly court challenge.

You should therefore look carefully at:

- **Job specifications:**
what are the required qualifications and experiences?
- **Advertising:**
wording, imagery, location
- **Application forms:**
omit references to age
- **Selection procedures:**
shortlists, format of interviews, criteria for selection

The mature@eu Toolbox



With a set of over 280 innovative materials, the **mature@eu Toolbox** will assist you in the implementation of age-diverse recruitment policies and practices. This toolbox has been designed:

- **To influence your awareness** of the added value of different age groups, the predicted shrinking labour force and that age-discrimination is unlawful in all EU countries.
- **To help you** develop the **business case** for age diverse recruitment;
- **To provide you** with essential tools for **implementing** age-diversity in the recruitment process.

This toolbox contains assessment tools, checklists, guidelines, self evaluation tools, pod casts, good practice examples, key figures and reports, from a range of countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

Search for materials at
www.mature-project.eu/toolbox/

What you can do to develop good practice in...



...age diverse recruitment strategies?

"Good practice means ensuring that older workers have either equal or special access to the available jobs and that potential applicants are not discriminated against either directly or indirectly."

(Walker, 1998:3)

Three methods for the implementation of age-diversity in your company:

- Strategies aimed at **eliminating** all aspects of **discrimination**, including age discrimination.

- Strategies aimed at **achieving a balanced age structure** within an organisation or strategies anticipating future age-management problems.
- Strategies **discriminating in favour** of older workers so that companies actively seek to recruit them because of, for example, expected business benefits or because wages are subsidised through active labour market programmes.

Source:
European Commission,
2006:202f



Torsten Weber, Technologie- und Innovationsberatungsagentur in Bayern e. V. beim DGB, GERMANY:

"Since the recent comprehensive reforms in Germany, the employment rate of persons aged 55 to 64 has increased from 37.5% in 2000 to 45.4% in 2005. However, this success is largely due to the fact that many job seekers were removed from unemployment statistics by changing their official status, for example by creating so-called "One-Euro-Jobbers". The figures illustrate that government policies can make a difference. But without a sustained strategy you will not get substantial results."

The A-B-C-D model...



...offers an excellent guide to implementing bias-free recruitment policies:

A **Ages:** Chronological ages should never be quoted unless there is some assured relevance attached to doing so.

B **Balance:** the proportion older people within a workforce should reflect, by and large, the same mix of qualities and characteristics as the population at large.

C **Concept:** those involved in developing age diverse recruitment should embrace a modern approach to older age employees and apply this concept in their own work.

D **Display:** those involved should occasionally check their work against the touchstone of the large proportion of the population in the older age group.

Source:
Wait & Midwinter, 2005:26

What specific measures can you introduce to ensure...

...age-diverse recruitment practices?

- Ensure ageist language is not used in adverts. Phrases like 'applicants should be 25-35 years of age', 'young graduates', 'bright young thing', 'mature person' are discriminatory.
- Focus on job needs, don't set unnecessary standards for experience, personal qualities or qualifications; this could be perceived as age discrimination.
- Publicize your vacancies in ways most likely to attract a mixed-age response – consider national and local newspapers, magazines, trade publications, free papers, internet, job centres and voluntary organisations.
- Ensure personal details are separated when sifting applications and re-introduced at the end of the recruitment process. This is to ensure that decisions are objective and not based on age.
- Be aware that older people increasingly make up a bigger proportion of the population. Ignoring this will reduce your choice of potential candidates.
- Count the number of candidates of different age groups who were short-listed, interviewed and appointed. This helps you monitor what is happening in the recruitment process.

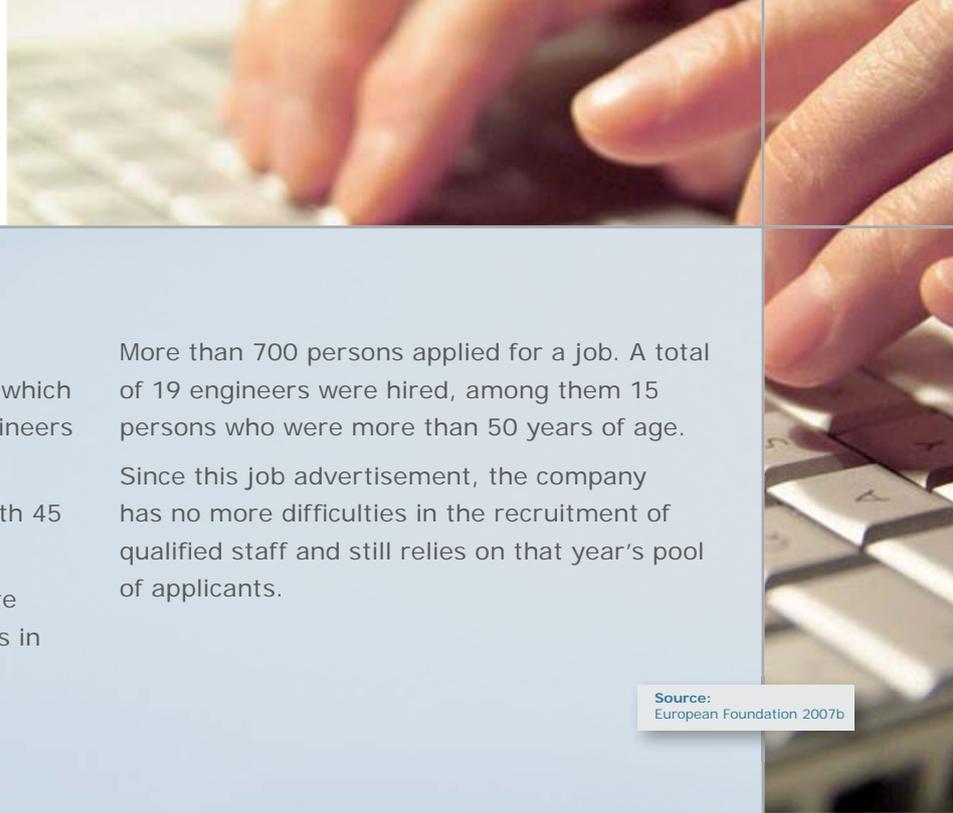
Source:
Age Positive DWP



Marjolijn Blokzijl - The Netherlands Platform Older People and Europe, **NETHERLANDS:**

"The optimism about the reduction of unemployment and increased employment possibilities is not felt by the older unemployed. Despite a favourable economic situation and the large shortage of personnel, almost half of the Dutch households and a third of the labour market professionals expect an increase in unemployment of older people (aged 50 and up)."

Good Practice...



...at Fahrion Engineering

In 2000, the German company Fahrion Engineering placed a job advertisement in which it addressed “mature”, highly qualified engineers only.

The advertisement’s text read: “Too old with 45 – redundant with 55?”

Fahrion Engineering had taken this measure as the company faced increasing difficulties in recruiting qualified engineers.

More than 700 persons applied for a job. A total of 19 engineers were hired, among them 15 persons who were more than 50 years of age.

Since this job advertisement, the company has no more difficulties in the recruitment of qualified staff and still relies on that year’s pool of applicants.

Source:
European Foundation 2007b

What measures can you follow to ensure...

...age-diverse selection practices?

- Select candidates on their **skills** and **abilities**, this is more likely to find you the right employee. Ensure the process is fair and consistent and it does not discriminate against a particular age group.
- Ensure interviews only ask **job-related questions** and do not base decisions on prejudice and stereotypes. Marking candidates against your selection criteria will help with decision-making and help monitor fairness of the process.
- Use a **mixed age interview panel** to reduce the possibility of age bias.

- Make sure you're **not making assumptions** about the capability or medical fitness of someone based purely on their age.

"Selecting new employees can take time, and may include a number of different stages, for example: sifting, interviewing and testing. Allowing age discrimination to creep in at any stage can restrict your access to good candidates by as much as a quarter, if not more."

(Age Positive DWP)

Source:
Age Positive DWP

In fact, mature workers will enable your business to:



- Retain valuable skills and experience
- Have a loyal, productive, motivated workforce
- Maintain your profitability and business performance
- Achieve an age-balanced workplace

The **mature@eu** e-learning platform will support you and your organisation to become effective in age-diverse recruitment.

Feel welcome to the e-learning platform for age-diverse recruitment

www.mature-project.eu/e-learning/

This e-learning platform:

- provides you with a clear understanding and guidance on:
 - the drivers for change
 - how to build the business case
 - how to implement age-diverse recruitment procedures
- is custom-designed
- is informative and free
- gives you practical support and provides self-directed learning experiences
- is available in eight languages

In this respect, we wish you good luck on the journey becoming an employer of choice for all: for younger and for older workers.

The mature@eu partnership:

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Marjolijn Blokzijl | AGE - the European Older People's Platform | www.npoe.nl

Rachel Buchanan | European Older Peoples Platform | www.age-platform.org

Mike Healy | University of Westminster | www.wmin.ac.uk

Günther Lang | Software AG | www.softwareag.com

Erich Lifka | Wirtschaftskammer Österreich | www.wifi.at/ikt/info.html

Rachel Kryś | The Employers Forum on Age | www.efa.org.uk

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